



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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### Scottish Government

#### **Trade Minister highlights human rights concerns**

The UK Government's intended approach to current free trade agreement negotiations with Israel raises concerns over human rights issues, according to Trade Minister Ivan McKee.

In a letter to Penny Mordaunt, Minister of State for Trade Policy, Mr McKee said the Scottish Government has specific concerns in relation to the human rights record and ongoing conflict in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

The Minister also raised that the UK Government has not included a full impact assessment on a potential new deal and how it would impact the UK nations. Mr McKee's response also states that it is clear no potential benefits from a new agreement would mitigate the negative effects of Brexit.

<https://www.gov.scot/news/trade-minister-highlights-human-rights-concerns/>

#### **UK-Israel trade agreement: letter from the Minister for Business, Trade, Tourism and Enterprise**

The Scottish Government welcomes opportunities for Scottish businesses and our economy to grow, in particular in trade in services, where the coverage of the existing trade agreement with Israel is limited. However, we must be sure that any new agreement is in the best interests of Scotland and consistent with the principles in [Scotland's Vision for Trade](#). ...

I have called on the UK Government to ensure that current and future trading partners comply with their human rights and international law obligations. We have specific concerns in relation to the human rights record and ongoing conflict in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs). In particular, we are concerned about reported labour rights violations of Palestinian and migrant workers under Israeli working practices. It is vital that you ensure that that goods and services sourced from illegal settlements in the OPTs are excluded from this agreement in a way that can be reliably enforced. It is also important that any expansion of trade in architectural and construction services within Israel does not lead to involvement in the punitive demolition and destruction of Palestinian public and private property in the OPTs, which is a violation of international law.

It is disappointing that you have not undertaken a human rights impact assessment in advance of negotiations, as we have consistently called for, but urge you to fully consider these important issues and use the trade negotiations to progress human rights objectives. I would also welcome further information on what plans you may have to similarly develop the current trade agreement with the Palestinian Authority of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

As you know, I have repeatedly made the case for a full role for the Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament in the development of trade agreements. I ... will continue to press for the Scottish Government to be fully involved in these negotiations to ensure they achieve the best outcome for Scotland and promote human rights.

**To read the full letter see**

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/uk-israel-trade-agreement-letter-from-the-minister-for-business-trade-tourism-and-enterprise/>

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## **Relevant Legislation** \*\* new or updated today

### **UK Parliament**

#### **Bill of Rights Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3227>

#### **Education (Non-religious Philosophical Convictions) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3186>

#### **Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2862>

#### **Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3325>

#### **Online Safety Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3137>

#### **Palestine Statehood (Recognition) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3217>

#### **Private Burial Grounds and Cemeteries Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3188>

#### **Universal Credit (Removal of Two Child Limit) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3163>

#### **Schools Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3156>

## Scottish Parliament

### Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/gender-recognition-reform-scotland-bill>

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## Consultations

\*\* new or updated today

**Standards for ethnicity data** (closing date 30 August 2022)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/standards-for-ethnicity-data>

**Equality Evidence Strategy 2023-25** (closing date 23 September 2022)

<https://tinyurl.com/mpunv6cw>

**\*\* Increasing the use of mediation in the civil justice system** (closing date 4 October 2022)

<https://consult.justice.gov.uk/dispute-resolution/increasing-the-use-of-mediation/>

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The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) is Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SC029438